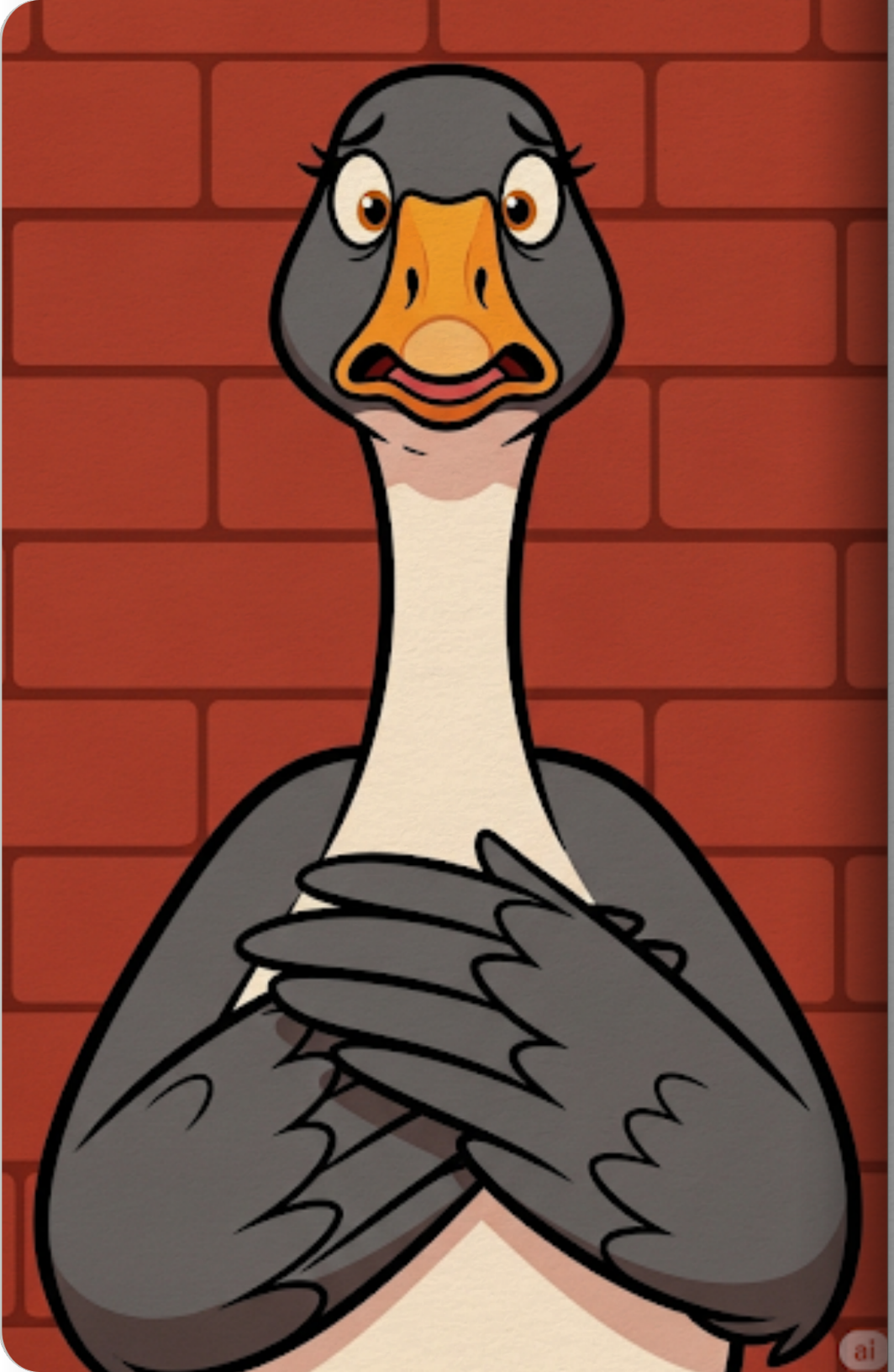
The High Stage

By gavin leonard

Penelope the goose was, by nature, quite jumpy. She liked to stay close to the big brick barn wall, where she felt safe and hidden from shadows and sudden movements.

But shadows couldn't fool everyone. A sleek, black shape named Jasper, who was very clever and very hungry, spotted her immediately. His tail twitched with an idea.

Jasper crept closer, practicing his smoothest voice. “Good morning, dearest Penelope,” he purred, his eyes wide and innocent. “I hope I didn’t startle you?”



Penelope shuddered and stepped back further. “Y-you didn’t, Jasper. I was just admiring the mortar,” she squeaked, knowing cats loved to flatter before they pounced.

“Ah, such humility!” Jasper sighed dramatically. “But I must confess, I have heard rumors. Rumors that you, Penelope, possess the most glorious singing voice in the entire farmyard!”

Penelope blinked. A beautiful voice? She only honked! But she remembered her Grandma Goose's wise words: When a cat compliments your talent, check his paws for string.

"Well, thank you, Jasper," Penelope said, trying to sound braver than she felt. "But my voice needs a very high stage to really shine. It needs to reach the clouds."

Jasper's grin widened. "A high stage? Why, that is no problem at all! I know the perfect spot: the very peak of the old corrugated roof! I can lead the way, quick as a wink!"

"Now, Penelope, sing for me!" Jasper demanded, finally dropping the kind facade. But Penelope just smiled, took three deep breaths, spread her wide, strong wings, and flew high into the sky!